

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-12

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DRAFTED BY NEA/INS:JELEADER:MMK

APPROVED BY NEA:JJSISCO

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 197167

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, CE, PFOR

SUBJ: PL-480: AMBASSADOR KANAKARATNE CALL ON MR. SISCO

REF: COLOMBO 2457, STATE 196978

1. AMBASSADOR KANAKARATNE CALLED ON ASSISTANT SECRETARY SISCO OCTOBER 3 TO SEEK WORD ON US ABILITY TO MEET ITS PLEDGE OF \$15-18 MILLION IN PL-480 WHEAT FLOUR. MR. SISCO REPORTED THAT HE HAD NO NEW INFORMATION SINCE THE AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON MR. WHITE OF AID (STATE 195281), THAT THE OUTLOOK WAS UNPROMISING, BUT THAT THE PL-480 PROBLEM REMAINED UNDER REVIEW. HE STATED WE ARE LOOKING FOR OTHER WAYS TO HELP, BUT DO NOT KNOW YET WHETHER THIS IS POSSIBLE. HE EMPHASIZED HE HAD NOT GIVEN UP ON THIS BUT AMBASSADOR CAN BE ASSURED WE WILL PROMPTLY LET HIM KNOW IF DOOR IS CLOSED.

2. MR. SISCO SAID THAT WE ARE VERY CONSCIOUS OF THE FAVORABLE TREND IN US-CEYLONESE RELATIONS AND THE PERSONAL RAPPORT WHICH HAS DEVELOPED BETWEEN MRS. BANDARANAIKE AND
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THE PRESIDENT. WE ARE ALSO AWARE THAT THE GSL IS GOING

THROUGH DIFFICULT TIMES WITH THE FOOD SITUATION AND THE RECENTLY ANNOUNCED AUSTERITY MEASURES. WE ARE PAINFULLY CONSCIOUS OF OUR INABILITY TO DATE TO MAKE GOOD ON OUR

PLEDGE FOR PL 480 AID, SUBJECT TO SUPPLY AVAILABILITY, AT THE AID GROUP MEETING. SISCO EMPHASIZED THE HIGH VALUE WE PLACE ON OUR GOOD RELATIONS WITH SRI LANKA AND OUR DEEP COMMITMENT TO HAVING THESE CONTINUE IN OUR MUTUAL INTEREST.

3. THE AMBASSADOR REPLIED THAT IN GOOD CONSCIENCE HE HAD HAD TO REPORT TO COLOMBO THE IMPRESSION HE HAD GAINED FROM HIS MEETING WITH MR. WHITE INDICATING PL-480 WHEAT MIGHT NOT BE AVAILABLE EVEN IN THE THIRD AND FOURTH QUARTERS OF FY 74. HE NOTED THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN US-CEYLONese RELATIONS DATING FROM THE PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT IN 1971. HE POINTED OUT THAT SHE HEADS A COALITION GOVERNMENT WITH DIFFERING VIEWS ON FOREIGN POLICY, BUT NEVERTHELESS HAD EXERCISED STRICT DISCIPLINE IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS, ESCHEWING STATEMENTS AND POLICIES DETRIMENTAL TO US. MR. SISCO ACKNOWLEDGED THAT SHE HAD NOT SAID A DAMAGING WORD. AMBASSADOR SAID IF THE US CANNOT MEET ITS COMMITMENT, PARTICULARLY SINCE OTHER DONORS HAVE COME THROUGH ON THEIR PLEDGES INCLUDING GRAIN, ELEMENTS IN THE GSL LESS SYMPATHETIC TO THE US WILL ASK WHAT HER FRIENDLY POLICY TOWARD THE US HAS PRODUCED.

4. AMBASSADOR KANAKARATNE NOTED THAT THE PROBLEM WAS HEIGHTENED BECAUSE OF THE POSSIBLY MISUNDERSTOOD STATEMENT BY MR. BUTZ THAT THE US HAD NO WHEAT SHORTAGE. THE AMBASSADOR EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT ELEMENTS IN SRI LANKA MAY GIVE CURRENCY TO A NOTION THAT THE US CANNOT BE RELIED UPON. SOME WILL NOTE THE TWO MILLION TON SOVIET WHEAT LOAN TO INDIA AND SUGGEST THAT IF SRI LANKA HAD FOLLOWED A DIFFERENT (PRO-SOVIET) COURSE, IT TOO MIGHT HAVE GOTTEN SOVIET HELP. RUSH

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